

CAJUNS, CREOLES, PIRATES AND PLANTERS

Your New Louisiana Ancestors Format

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RESEARCH METHODS: With the internet and all the material that is now available online and in published form, research has become so much easier, that is, if you have a computer or access to major book collections. There are still many researchers that have not converted to the new systems for checking out genealogical data. This means that all the older methods of compiling genealogical material are still important to these researchers.

For other genealogists, the way computers have made the world of research a smaller place is evident. However, there are still advantages to holding on to the methods of doing personal research in libraries, courthouses, and major research facilities, even to writing personal letters. This merely means that not everything is online, and there will always be a need to collect, study, publish, and distribute these items of importance to family researchers.

Having done so much of my own research in libraries and courthouses, I have to admit that seeing this material in print or in its original form is definitely exciting. Regardless of how much I use the internet, there just isn't the same thrill I feel at seeing old documents in courthouses. Looking up land records in the courthouse of my home parish of DeSoto was, and always will be, a great experience, and I think how lucky it is to have these old records still available for viewing.

Of course, it is also good to know that much of this material has been microfilmed. Whether it is online or at the original location, researchers still have to have a plan of what they are looking for, and preparing what is needed ahead of time is definitely a time-saving effort. Going to a research center without a plan is just not the best way to spend valuable time especially if it happens to be in an out-of-town location.

Even now when I travel, I sometimes stop in at archival facilities, but I have been doing this long enough that most of the time a plan is not needed. My concern sometimes is just to find out what is available so I can share this with other researchers through my column formats. I will always believe that it is very important for family historians to visit the places where their ancestors lived. Many do this in the form of family vacations although this is more than likely to be something that happens during retirement years.

Knowing this, I have tried to instill in my readers the importance of encouraging children the importance of preserving a family history. In this day and time, it seems to get less attention than it did in the past. Thank goodness I grew up in an atmosphere of individuals who wanted to learn and keep up with the times. This not only applies to my own family members, but many of my teachers were also

strong sources of inspiration in the preservation of family values. A sense of preserving the past doesn't seem to be at the forefront of education now.

Regardless of how you have been introduced to family research, it is something that you should take very seriously. So many records are lost because people haven't taken the time to encourage a sense of duty to one's self and to one's state and country. If you go to research facilities today, you will see that the majority of the individuals here are older, but perhaps retirement makes this possible. Whatever the case, it is good to see this activity.

Researching is time consuming, but it is also rewarding when the information you are seeking is located. Sometimes this information comes in the most unlikely sources. Thus we get back to the fact that you need to plan ahead to shorten your time and bring forth more results. Genealogy is the door to one's past. All you have to do is open it and walk in. The possibilities of finding notes of interest are endless.

One's journey into the past is filled with interesting things, but it is more than just studying your own family. It involves learning about the places where your ancestors lived, the period of time in which they lived, and how they managed to survive through all the hardships that came their way. By beginning with the present and working backwards, you learn to live the way they lived and get a feeling of pride in being a part of their lives. Once you go back as far as you can, you can then see the overall picture of how you came to be where you are today. It is a fascinating trip – back into the past and then forward again.

A lot of what I have written here is old knowledge to many, but to the younger researchers, it should be a little bit of inspiration to do better, to accomplish more, and to preserve this data collection for future generations. As you go through the research process, you have found that many individual family histories have already been compiled.

Even though you may not have located the information you need to build your family data, don't ever give up. In many cases, when I ran into what I thought was a dead end to my search, I have discovered a way to learn more through an allied line. So many times in the past, families traveled in groups from one state to another and all across the country. It isn't that way now. Our ancestors moved to better themselves, so the entire family and sometimes neighbors and friends got together and moved to other areas. Compare that to now when you seek to better yourself with another job or to attend schools in other areas. Today, there is more of an individual approach to moving. A family of the past is quite different from a family of today.

Just remember that wherever you are, the past will follow you, and the future will offer more sources for you to assemble your family history. Having the desire to do this research is what makes any genealogical project rewarding for you. Just remember to document your findings as best you can, and make sure this is all

recorded so that others can benefit from your work. It is an ongoing effort and one that will bring you much joy.

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SOCIETY PUBLICATION: The latest issue of *Les Voyageurs* has arrived, and it is again filled with excellent research information. This one comes from the German-Acadian Coast Historical & Genealogical Society, organized in July of 1979 and incorporated as a non-profit group on May 14, 1981. This publication is issued in March, June, and September, and some back issues are still available.

Individual memberships are \$20 per year with family memberships being set at \$25. Issues of *Les Voyageurs* come with memberships in the society. The latest issue contains more listings of students at St. Stanislaus College (by Emory C. Webre). Also included are marriage records from St. John the Baptist Catholic Church (1772-1838), information on the Webre/Weber family, continued data on Jeanne Marie Josephine Robin de Logny, a petition for a public road, Benjamn Castrillo's data from a weekly newspaper devoted to the sugar, rice, and other agricultural industries. There are also queries.

For more information, you can contact them at P.O. Box 3086, LaPlace, LA 70069.

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FREE SERVICE: Correspondence to this column should be directed to Damon Veach, Cajuns, Creoles, Pirates and Planters, 709 Bungalow Lane, Baton Rouge, LA 70802-5337. The e-mail address is ancestorslaveach@cox.net. Queries can be any length, and book reviews are printed as space permits, and you are encouraged to take advantage of this free service. All genealogical/historical/preservation books are reviewed in this column format, but a review copy is necessary for this service. Another service is offered here too. Claitor's Publishing can serve as a distributor for self-published genealogy titles. Go to their homepage for details on how you can obtain this excellent service. It is a way to get out-of-print books back into the system and definitely is a great assistance to genealogists who may need this information.

